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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 08, 2009

Summary: The visits of U.S. Deputy Secretary Jacob Lew, and a Congressional delegation led by Adam Smith continued to garner extensive media coverage on the second consecutive day. Prime Minister Gilani's statement urging United States to "expedite passage of Kerry-Lugar bill and Reconstruction Opportunities Zones bill by the Congress" received front page coverage in all major newspapers on Tuesday. Newspapers also reported that the CODEL met with Army Chief General Kayani and Interior Minister Malik. Reports of the Deputy Secretary Lew's visit to Peshawar, Mardan and his meetings with the senior NWFP officials and the Malakand IDPs were also highlighted. The weekend editions of the newspapers front-paged U.S. Embassy's spokesman remarks "rejecting" allegations of U.S. involvement in the plane crash that killed former military President Ziaul Haq.

Most major newspapers ran editorials on a host of subjects including the Prime Minister Gilani's remarks on the disbursement of the U.S. aid, prevailing sugar crisis, the Sri Lankan funding for terrorists and so forth. The Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn," noted that "Capitol Hill is in no mood for a repeat of the blank checks issued to the Musharraf regime." The center-right national English daily "The Nation," advised that "what is needed on the part of the government is to learn to live within its means and get rid of its reliance of foreign aid. It will otherwise continue to be dictated to on domestic and foreign policies." Toeing the line, its Urdu sister newspaper, daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," observed that "instead of requesting America to give the assistance directly to the government of Pakistan, the Prime Minister (Gilani) should have courage to tell everyone that Pakistan will neither receive aid from America or any other country, nor will we accept any plan or order against our national interest." End Summary.

News Stories

"Gilani's Plea For Swift Passage Of U.S. Bills" "Dawn" (09/08)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani called upon the United States on Monday to expedite passage of the Kerry-Lugar bill and Reconstruction Opportunities Zones (ROZ) bill by the Congress for delivering the peace dividend by way of investments in health, industry and infrastructure sectors in Swat, Malakand and tribal regions. Talking to a U.S. delegation comprising Congressmen Adam Smith and Bobby Neal and Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford, he stressed the need for channeling disbursement of U.S. financial assistance through the established mechanism and institutions in

Pakistan to save on administrative expenses on projects run by the USAID and NGOs."

"U.S. Legislators Call On COAS" "Business Recorder" (09/08)

"U.S. Congressman Adam Smith, Member of House Armed Services Committee and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence along with Congressman Bobby Bright and congress woman Gabrielle Giffords called on chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani on Monday at General Headquarters (GHQ). The visiting dignitaries remained with the chief of Army Staff for some time and discussed matters of mutual interest."

"U.S. Delegation Meets Rehman Malik; Exchanges Views Of Mutual Interest" "Jang" (09/08)

"A U.S. Congressional delegation, led by Congressman Adam Smith, called on Minister for Interior Rehman Malik in Islamabad. The bilateral relations between the U.S. and Pakistan and matters of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting."

"CM Tells U.S. Team Malakand People Awaiting Compensation" "The News" (09/08)

"NWFP Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti has said the morale of the people of Malakand is high, however, they are waiting for the reconstruction of their wrecked houses and compensation for other losses. He expressed this while talking to a U.S. delegation, which met him under Deputy Secretary of State for Resources and Management, Mr. Jacob J. Lew, in Peshawar on Monday, says an official communication."

"Owais Briefs U.S. Delegation About IDPs Rehabilitation Process" "The Nation" (09/08)

"The visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Resources and Management Jacob J. Lew accompanied by an eight-member delegation on Monday called on the NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani at Governor's House, Peshawar and exchanged views on the prevailing situation in the region with special reference to the prospects for restoration of peace and normalcy. The delegation, which also included U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, took keen interest in the ongoing measures for rehabilitation of internally displaced persons as well as ensuring sustainable economic development in the terror-hit areas."

"U.S. Ambassador Visits Gadoon Industrial Zone, ROZs Discussed" "The News" (09/08)

"Ambassador of the United States of America (USA) to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, leading a high level delegation, on Monday paid a visit to Gadoon Amazai Industrial Estate with respect to observe the prospects of U.S. sponsored Reconstruction Opportunity Zones (ROZs). The U.S. envoy visited different sections of the industrial zone and also paid a detailed visit to Saif Textile Mills. Later, the U.S. Ambassador attended a meeting held at the Saif Textile Mills in regard to holding a discussion with industrialists about the setting up of ROZs in the area. During the meeting, U.S. Ambassador apprised the participants that the government of United States wanted to set up ROZs in different industrial areas of Pakistan for providing easy access for the country's goods to American markets."

"U.S. Denies Role In Zia Plane Crash" "Daily Times" (09/07)

"The U.S. on Sunday rejected allegations that it was in any way involved in the plane crash that killed former president General Ziaul Haq and several top Pakistani officials. U.S. Embassy spokesman Richard Snelsire denied former Intelligence Bureau Chief Brig (R) Imtiaz Ahmed's claims that the U.S. was behind the crash, adding that, '[other] allegations that the U.S. tried to influence or stall the investigations are baseless and untrue. We reject all such allegations.' 'Dunya TV' quoted U.S. Embassy sources as saying that since a U.S. official was also killed in the crash, it was in their interest to get to the bottom of this mystery."

"U.S. Satisfied With Pakistan's Nuclear Security: Gates" "Dawn" (09/08)

"The United States is satisfied with the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said in an interview with Al Jazeera, the Qatar-based satellite news channel, according to a transcript, calling the arrangements in place 'sufficient and adequate.'"

"No More Organized Resistance In Swat: ISPR" "The News" (09/08)

"Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Athar Abbas on Monday said organized resistance in Swat and Malakand has come to an end and the remaining terrorists and miscreants are on the run."

"2 Foreigners Among 7 Killed In Drone Hits" "The News" (09/08)

"Seven persons including two foreign militants were killed and same number of others injured in drone missile strikes by a CIA-operated US spy plane in Machikhel village in the Mirali subdivision of the restive North Waziristan Agency (NWA) on Monday evening, official and tribal sources told 'The News' from Mirali by telephone."

"10 Militants Killed, Houses Of LI Leaders, Supporters Razed" "The News" (09/08)

"Security forces claimed killing 10 more militants and demolishing a dozen houses owned by the banned Lashkar-e-Islam (LI) leaders and their supporters in different areas of the Bara subdivision of Khyber Agency on the seventh day of the operation."

Roadside Blast Kills Five Soldiers In South Waziristan Agency" "The News" (09/08)

"Five soldiers were killed and four others sustained injuries when a roadside remote-controlled bomb planted by militants went off in the Zariban Kot area in Tiarza Tehsil of South Waziristan Agency on Monday."

"Balochistan Cantonment Plan Put On Hold" "Dawn" (09/08)

"In a move that might lower political temperature in strife-ridden Balochistan, the government on Monday said work on setting up cantonments in the province was being put on hold. Disclosing the major move, the Balochistan Chief Minister said a formal announcement about abandoning the construction of cantonments and several relief measures would soon be made by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani during his visit to the province."

"Confidential Report Sent To The Federal Government Regarding 200 Houses In Islamabad Being Used By Americans" "Khabrain" (09/08)

"A confidential intelligence report on the U.S. Embassy's rental of over 200 houses in Islamabad has been sent to the Federal Government. The report talks of American officials activities in these houses and houses location in various sectors."

"Black-Water In Pakistan: Intelligence Agencies Submit Report To Government" "Business Recorder" (09/08)

"The intelligence agencies of Pakistan have provided a detailed report on about 200 houses, acquired by the U.S. Embassy in different areas of the Federal capital, including the houses taken on rent by the Black-water World-wide, informed sources said in Islamabad on Monday."

Editorials/Op-eds

"American Aid," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/08)

"We are the ones asking for aid and the U.S. has every right to decide how it should spend its money.... Still, it needs to be asked whether the best efforts of top professionals may not produce better results than those of low-paid government functionaries. Or could it be that local people best understand local concerns? A middle ground has to be found, for close cooperation is essential if

the greater good is to be achieved. Donors have learned from the '90s and are unlikely to throw money at the kind of fly-by-night NGOs that used to crop up like a rash whenever any development project was floated. The government, for its part, must make an honest assessment of its capacity and present a detailed plan of operation that will satisfy lawmakers in the U.S. Capitol Hill is in no mood for a repeat of the blank checks issued to the Musharraf regime."

"Disbursing U.S. Aid," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/08)

"Washington insists on disbursing a large portion of the [\$1.5 billion] assistance through NGOs. Prime Minister Gilani's argument against using the NGO conduit is that it involves out of proportion administrative expenses to the extent of 35 to 40 percent. Others who object to the NGOs' involvement maintain that as U.S. agencies would pick and choose the NGOs for the purpose, this would provide undue leverage to Washington on civil society.... The argument generally given in favor of diverting aid through the NGOs is that there is rampant corruption in government departments.... In the final analysis the beggars cannot be choosers. In the past also a portion of the aid has gone back to the U.S. in lieu of the 'buy America' policy and as payments to U.S. advisers and functionaries. What is more the aid has never been without strings. What is needed on the part of the government is to learn to live within its means and get rid of its reliance of foreign aid. It will otherwise continue to be dictated on domestic and foreign policies."

"Getting Rid Of U.S. Debts Is The Only Dignified Way Out," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/08)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani has stressed in a meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for Resources and Management Jacob J. Lew that America should distribute aid to Pakistan via Pakistani a government mechanism as aid disbursement through NGO's increases the expenses by 35-40 percent.... Instead of requesting America to give the assistance directly to the government of Pakistan, the Prime Minister should have courage to tell everyone that we will neither receive aid from America or any other country nor will we accept any plan or order against our national interest.... The time has come for us to introduce austerity in our lives and block plans to turn U.S. Embassy into a military base and banish Black-water operatives and instruments of Jews and Hindus from Pakistan."

"Distribution Of U.S. Aid Through NGOs," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (09/08)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's standpoint on American aid distribution through American institutions and Pakistani NGOs echoes the sentiments of Pakistani nation.... This aspect of the American aid is preposterous that out of \$1.5 billion the government will practically get \$300 million while the rest of the amount will go to the agencies and NGOs.... America should be asked to form a monitoring team comprising representatives of U.S. and Pakistan administrations to oversee the aid distribution and welfare projects."

"U.S. Needs Image Improvement," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (09/08)

"The controversy about tragedy of mid-air crash that killed the then President Ziaul Haq on August 17, 1988 has also resurfaced with statements and counter statements on the cause of the crash and who was behind. Prominent politician and son of the late President - Ijaz-ul-Haq - is alleging that the United States forcefully stopped the probe into the incident and his assertion has been corroborated by an ex-master spy Brig (Retd) Imtiaz Ahmad.... The U.S. mission in Islamabad has come out with a strong denial emphasizing that the country was not behind scrapping of the investigations into the unfortunate incident.... In our view, the claim of the U.S. Embassy might be right but the fact remains that there is a general impression in Pakistan that the U.S. was behind the Bahawalpur crash.... Anyhow, leaving this aside, we may ask the U.S. to give serious consideration to the phenomenon i.e. why in Pakistan or for that matter in rest of the world wrongs are attributed to the U.S."

"Afghan Elections And Expansion In The U.S. Operation," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (09/08)

"There are hints coming from Washington that America is thinking of expanding the operation against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and extending it to Pakistani tribal areas.... Recent U.S. statements had been making it clear that America's real targets are those leaders of al-Qaeda who are hiding in Pakistan.... If America wants peace in the region then it should trust political process and democracy instead of relying on more troops, weapons and war plans."

"Evaluating The Swat Test," an op-ed by Dr. Maleeha Lodhi in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/08)

"In addition to regaining control of the region, Operation Rah-e-Rast's accompanying goal has been to restore public confidence in the law enforcement agencies and the civil administration so as to create an environment unfavorable to the free movement of insurgents and inhospitable to the re-emergence of militancy.... The establishment of hybrid security arrangement and conclusion of the stabilization phase will dictate the army's ability to gradually withdraw from the area, leaving behind a permanent garrison. Just as imposing in the recovery phase are the 'build and rehabilitate' challenges which also involve putting in place sustainable local governance and justice systems. The outlook here is uncertain as the civilian complement to the military operation has yet to come into energetic play."

"Is America Our Friend?," an op-ed by Rasul Bakhsh Rais in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (09/08)

"The United States has come to occupy a central position in the strategic environment of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This may not be an ideal situation for us but that is the reality. Our rational self-interest in this situation dictates that we help rebuild a stable Afghanistan, help end the war and deepen our relationship with the United States, taking it beyond the contingencies of Afghanistan. There is genuine interest in the U.S. and other world capitals in stabilizing and normalizing Pakistan by giving it a democratic and developmental orientation. It depends on us how best we leverage our position and advance our national interests."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson